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Main Trends in Soviet Foreign Policy

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MAIN TRENDS IN SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

THE PROBLEM

To estimate main trends in Soviet foreign policy, with attention to the influence of political developments within the USSR and the world Communist movement.

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

A. The forced withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba last fall was the most dramatic in a series of disappointments and setbacks which have been plaguing Soviet policy. It is true that these have been offset somewhat by space successes, by advances in the development of missiles and nuclear weapons, and by the retention of a foothold in the Western Hemisphere. Nevertheless, the fundamentally optimistic outlook of the Soviet leaders seems overlaid at present with a sober appreciation of obstacles and dangers and a realization that earlier expectations of rapid advances must be stretched out into the future. The current mood of the Soviet leadership must also be adversely affected by the continuing Chinese challenge to Soviet authority in the Bloc and the Communist movement. (*Paras. 1-7, 30-32*)

B. Largely as a result of these frustrations to Soviet hopes, Khrushchev's leadership appears to have come into question in recent months. Although his colleagues probably have not been seeking his downfall, they have apparently been trying to com-

NOTE: A detailed examination of Soviet military and economic policy appears in two recent estimates: NIE 11-4-63, "Soviet Military Capabilities and Policies, 1962-1967," dated 20 March 1963, TOP SECRET, and NIE 11-5-63, "Soviet Economic Problems," dated 20 March 1963, SECRET.

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pel him to take greater account of their collective opinions; Khrushchev has responded with policy revisions which seem to reflect their advice. While Khrushchev's freedom of action may thus be somewhat restricted at present, we believe that his essential authority remains intact. (Paras. 8-12)

C. In the present phase, we think that the Soviets are unlikely either to make serious attempts to resolve cold-war tensions or to undertake a vigorous new offensive against non-Communist positions. Instead, they seem to see the present period as one which can best be used to build up their strength and to fortify existing positions in preparation for future opportunities. They apparently do not plan any early moves either toward agreement or toward a heightened crisis over Berlin. We believe that their approach to disarmament will be primarily agitational. In Cuba, their primary present aims are to induce the US to move toward *de facto* acceptance of Castro and to consolidate the Soviet foothold, from which they mean to pursue the longer term struggle for Latin America. (Paras. 13-29)

D. We do not mean to imply, however, that Soviet foreign policy in the present phase will be passive. The USSR will be alert to search out vulnerabilities in the non-Communist world which it believes it can usefully exploit. It will also continue efforts to make its influence felt throughout the underdeveloped areas. Furthermore, while we think that the Soviets will take a sober view in the present period of the opportunities for a major advance, there is one important caveat to this judgment. We have identified the need for a major triumph which would reverse a trend of adversity as an important part of the motivation for deploying missiles to Cuba. This need still remains; therefore, we cannot exclude the possibility of some new and audacious move. (Paras. 17-18)

E. A key uncertainty surrounding future Soviet policy arises from the problem of the succession to Khrushchev. The initial tendency after his departure would probably be for more conservative elements to gain predominance, but the longer a succession struggle remains unresolved, the more tendency there would be for a wider range of alternative policies to be given active consideration. (Paras. 42-47)

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F. We see some prospect that, over the long run, the element of ideological hostility in the Soviet outlook might gradually diminish. This depends upon many uncertain factors, however, and even if it should come about, the requirements of Soviet national security, prestige, and ambition would still bring the USSR into frequent collision with the interests of other states. (Paras. 34-41)

DISCUSSION

I. THE BACKGROUND OF PRESENT SOVIET POLICY

1. The position in which the Soviet leaders find themselves in 1963 is not the one which they anticipated five years ago. Soviet thinking in 1958 was pervaded by a general optimism arising from a number of factors and calculations. Khrushchev, who had recently obtained a commanding position, apparently judged that he had overcome both economic dislocations and the political turbulence unloosed by de-Stalinization and could look forward to steady and substantial internal progress. His view of relations among Communist States seems to have been that, freed of the burden of Stalinist excesses, Soviet policy could guide the Bloc more effectively with a looser hand while preserving the essentials of Moscow's leadership.

2. Looking out upon the non-Communist world, Khrushchev probably had considerable hopes that trends in the underdeveloped areas would continue to run in his favor and that the USSR's earlier successes in the Middle East could be extended in that area and repeated in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Most important of all, the USSR's early sputnik and ICBM successes evidently persuaded him that the image and perhaps even the substance of Soviet physical power would soon overbear that of the US and bring the West to the conference table ready for concessions to his demands. In short, Khrushchev in 1958 saw the "world relation of forces" shifting rapidly in favor of the USSR and believed that history, with vigorous assistance from Moscow, would in the coming period reward the Soviet cause with regular, tangible advances.

3. Almost none of this has come to pass. In the relations of military power, regarded by the Soviets as an indispensable element in their general calculation of forces, US military and intelligence programs have led to a situation in which both sides, and indeed much of world opinion, understand that strategic advantage does not lie with the USSR. The Berlin ultimatum of 1958 remains unfulfilled and, save for the constriction of East Germany's refugee flow, basic Soviet aims in the key area of Germany are no further advanced. Although the So-

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viets may expect some benefits from present strains in NATO, over the last five years the strength of the West as a whole has almost certainly assumed a more formidable aspect in their eyes. In the underdeveloped countries, postcolonial nationalism has in most areas openly diverged from the hoped-for association with Soviet policies, and the USSR has not succeeded in establishing patronage, much less control, over the new nations.

4. Over the same period, the USSR's relations with its major ally have fallen into acute disarray, and the Soviets must now defend themselves throughout the Communist movement to preserve a leadership which had not been effectively challenged for four decades. At home, economic progress has faltered for a variety of reasons, of which the most important is the impact of military and space spending. At the same time, intellectual circles have used Khrushchev's attacks upon Stalin to raise painful questions which tend to challenge the authority of the party and its present leaders.

5. This is by no means to say that the last five years have brought an uninterrupted series of defeats for Soviet policy. During this period, for example, a procession of space feats has regularly revitalized Soviet prestige and sustained the USSR's lead in this important field of competition. Both nuclear and missile development have recorded notable technical progress. The Berlin Wall has greatly eased the problems of the client state of East Germany. Cuba's accession to the Communist camp remains a major gain despite the October backdown and the subsequent problems and dangers encountered in dealing with Castro and the US. Nevertheless, the Soviet leadership seems to recognize the last five years as a period in which problems accumulated.

6. There is no sign that this trend has caused the Soviets to revise their fundamental assumptions or that they regard these setbacks as more than temporary. There are many signs, however, of a recognition that earlier expectations were overoptimistic. Their unwillingness to turn over Berlin access to East Germany and their precipitate withdrawal of strategic missiles from Cuba are the most striking instances testifying to a sober appraisal of their opportunities under the present relation of forces between East and West. A similar concern can be observed in their treatment of the Sino-Soviet dispute, the importance of which they no longer attempt to deny, and of their military position, where assertions of absolute superiority have given way to claims of parity and expressions of anxiety about US intentions and the future relation of military forces. Similarly, the indiscriminate optimism of Soviet pronouncements concerning new countries and independence movements is now heavily tempered by criticism of the bourgeois and anti-Communist tendencies of nationalist leaders. Domestically, the regime has had to issue warnings to consumers that defense priorities will

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cut into the program to raise living standards, and Khrushchev does not seem confident that former rates of general economic growth can be quickly regained. In sum, the leadership appears to realize that the disappointments of recent years are not isolated but in fact represent a series of related setbacks stemming in part from mistaken appraisals of the possibilities open to Soviet policy.

7. In our view, the attempt to deploy strategic missiles in Cuba was in considerable part due to Soviet recognition of this trend. We think that the Soviet leaders, as they pondered this venture, were highly conscious of the failing momentum of their offensive and therefore put a very high premium on a dramatic triumph which they could turn to account in many ways—to alter both the image and the substance of relative power, to prepare a fruitful ground for Berlin negotiations, to undermine US influence in Latin America, to disarm Chinese criticisms. They may have judged the chances of failure as high but nevertheless felt it necessary to take a calculated risk, or the need for a victory may have led them to persuade themselves that the chances of failure were in fact low. In any case, we believe that the accumulated discouragements of recent years contributed to a decision which did not reflect the caution usually characteristic of Soviet foreign policy moves.

II. THE SITUATION IN THE LEADERSHIP

8. The failure of the Cuban missile venture has aggravated all the problems which the Soviets meant it to resolve. There are various signs that it has also affected Soviet top-level politics. Analysis of the workings of the Soviet leadership must always involve considerable speculation, but our tentative conclusions suggest that, at the present time, Soviet foreign policy may be influenced in more than usual degree by internal disagreements.

9. Khrushchev occupies the central position in Soviet politics, and his personality and conceptions give a strong stamp to both the internal and foreign policies of the USSR. He is capable of revising ideology to suit his purposes, but he is a great deal more than merely pragmatic. Compared to his predecessor and apparently also to some of his present colleagues, he is an imaginative innovator in both doctrine and policy, prone to change course rapidly in his incessant search for results. Approaching each new tactic with his characteristic energy, he tends to outdo others in boldness and often to assume considerable risk, trusting to his political skill to retrieve a situation somehow if difficulties ensue, even by reversing himself completely if necessary. The prime move of this type which can be directly associated with Khrushchev is the daring stroke of de-Stalinization, but the same traits can be observed in such disparate moves as the New Lands campaign, the Berlin challenge of 1958, the 1960 military reorganization plan, the

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cultivation of a "spirit of Camp David," and the two reconciliations with Tito. This pattern suggests to us that Khrushchev either initiated the Cuban missile venture himself or adopted it early and supported it against any doubters.

10. Because of these tendencies, any opposition to Khrushchev within the Soviet leadership has tended to be a conservative opposition, that is, one which both prefers greater caution in the appraisal of risks and shies away from novel departures in doctrine or policy. Khrushchev is accessible to the ideas of others, but it appears that most of his innovations originate either with himself, younger associates, or specialists rather than with his colleagues in the top leadership. While he is usually able to muster majorities for his proposals, some of them have at various times encountered opposition which has limited or even undone them. And when several of his programs encounter difficulties simultaneously, the restraints exerted by his colleagues accumulate. If the coalescence of opinion is strong, Khrushchev reacts by shifting ground to place himself at the head of the new and more conservative consensus which is forming. But he often returns to his original conceptions when he deems that a propitious moment has arrived.

11. The recent period appears to be one in which Khrushchev has been on the defensive and has had to move away from venturesome positions with which he had clearly identified himself in the past. In February, he all but abandoned his longstanding proposals for a substantial increase in allocations to agriculture and light industry; these had been continually opposed by the military and probably by some political leaders as well. In March, Khrushchev's chastisement of rebellious writers and artists abruptly checked the de-Stalinization campaign which he had himself revived last fall. Khrushchev in the past has used de-Stalinization as a means of direct attack upon political opponents, and it is possible that this latest reversal represents a successful defense by his intended targets. At a minimum, Khrushchev's judgment has probably been discredited by the strong antiregime overtones which emerged when the intellectuals responded to his earlier encouragement to renewed attacks on Stalin.

12. These moves are logical responses to real problems, but they also comport better with the predilections of some of Khrushchev's colleagues than with his own earlier views and this, along with several ambiguous indications of current uncertainty in Moscow, suggests that his predominance has diminished somewhat. The difficulties with China, the frustrations over Berlin, and the humiliation in Cuba have probably worked in the same direction. We think it unlikely that any faction is actively seeking Khrushchev's downfall. Instead, such leaders as Kozlov and Suslov have probably wished to bring about a greater practice of collectivity in Soviet policymaking and, by this route, to tighten central controls, insist upon ideological conformity, and eschew

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radical and risky departures in domestic and foreign affairs. Khrushchev's temperament is not amenable to collectivity, however, and he is likely to respond to checks of this kind by moving to reassert his dominance. Kozlov's illness is in this respect convenient; whether real or political, it undermines his present strength and may lead to further personnel shifts which Khrushchev could turn to his own advantage.

III. THE SOVIET VIEW OF PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES

13. We believe that a phase in regime politics of the sort described above has contributed to the relative immobility which seems to characterize current Soviet foreign policy. Even without this factor, however, there are important reasons for the Soviets to avoid major new moves. From the leadership's viewpoint, no major change in Soviet policy, such as a serious attempt to reduce cold-war tensions drastically or a vigorous new offensive against non-Communist positions, seems to offer much promise at present.

14. The Soviets would not expect that they could improve their position through negotiated agreements at a time when they are relatively weak and their enemy feels relatively strong. In such periods, the task of Soviet diplomacy is primarily to pursue defensive tactics until a more favorable correlation of forces can be brought about. Khrushchev's post-October advocacy of negotiation and compromise was intended primarily to buttress his version of the missile withdrawal as a victory for peace rather than a defeat for the Soviet Union and to forestall possible US efforts to follow up with pressures on other Soviet positions. The Soviets did offer one concession which seemed important, probably also to them, when Khrushchev accepted the principle of on-site inspection of a test ban. But the USSR soon indicated, by its conduct of the negotiations which followed and its refusal to go beyond three inspections, that it required greater counterconcessions than were forthcoming from the US before it would actually sign a treaty. The requirement to sustain some commitment to Cuba in the face of continued US hostility to Castro raised a further barrier against any general relaxation of tensions, as did the need for an external threat to justify continuing deprivations at home.

15. In fact, while statements praising the method of mutual concessions have not dropped out of Soviet propaganda altogether, they are now overshadowed by charges that the West remains hostile and has no genuine interest in reaching settlements. This does not mean, however, that aggressive Soviet actions are to follow. In the first place, the USSR recognizes that the world situation currently presents no opportunities for major advances at tolerable levels of risk: indeed, in 1963 it has suffered distinct reverses in the Middle East and is having difficulty in holding its own in some areas of Africa. In the second

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place, the Cuban episode has demonstrated to the Soviets that forward action is not without peril. Current Soviet pronouncements betray a keen appreciation of US power, and the October crisis has almost certainly persuaded them that they had underrated US determination to use that power.

16. In these circumstances, the Soviets seem to see the present period as one which can best be used to build up their strength and to fortify existing positions in preparation for future opportunities to make new advances. They seek in the first instance to strengthen their military power in hopes of gaining a position which repairs their prestige and lays greater inhibitions on Western policy.¹ Recent strong reaffirmations of military priorities reflect a determination to proceed with existing programs and, beyond this, a possible decision to increase military spending above previously planned levels. These programs already include the introduction of protected strategic missile systems, the development of very-high-yield warheads, and a major antiballistic missile effort which has already led to the deployment of a first-generation system at one location. The USSR is also pursuing a vigorous research and development effort aimed at technological advances which could radically enhance both the war-fighting capability and the political value of its military establishment. As an important aspect of these efforts, the Soviets are conducting a space program aimed at prestigious accomplishments and are almost certainly investigating the feasibility of military space systems.

17. We do not mean, however, that the Soviets consider that, unless they can achieve some sort of military advantage over the West, their political advances have reached final limits. Military power remains only one ingredient, albeit a very important one, in the Soviet concept of the forces which determine their prospects. Still less do we believe that Soviet foreign policy in the present phase will be passive. The USSR will be alert to search out vulnerabilities in the non-Communist world, to exploit the differences which have arisen in the NATO alliance, and to make its influence felt throughout Asia, Latin America, and Africa. But the Soviet leaders' outlook is not one of high confidence that events can readily be made to move in their favor, and we think it likely that they will take a sober view in the present period of the opportunities for major advance.

18. There is one important caveat to this judgment. We have identified the need for a major triumph which would reverse a trend of

¹ The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, does not consider the reasons listed sufficiently describe the basis for Soviet military policy decisions. He would insert the following sentence at this point:

This would be in furtherance of a basic Soviet military policy objective of building by such means as become available toward achievement of a military superiority over the West.

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adversity as an important part of the Soviet motivation for deploying missiles to Cuba. This need still remains; in fact, it has been magnified by the Cuban failure itself and by subsequent problems, such as the Communist setback in Iraq, the Western gain in India, and the renewed Chinese onslaught on Soviet leadership of the Communist movement. While we think it probable that the Cuban venture has strengthened the counsels of caution in Moscow, we cannot exclude the possibility of some new and audacious move. Such actions are essentially incalculable, although we think they are somewhat more likely when Khrushchev's ascendancy is high than when collectivity, that is, his need to defer to the opinions of others, has been strengthened. Nor can we predict where such a move might be launched. We note, however, that Berlin would offer a field for a far-reaching Soviet victory, although it is obviously an extremely risky area in which to pose a major challenge.

19. It is also conceivable that Khrushchev will react to present frustrations in the opposite way, that is, by focusing upon a major agreement with the West, rather than a major encroachment against it, as the means of restoring movement to Soviet policy and scoring a personal triumph. Given the present status of such issues as a nuclear test ban and Berlin, it is difficult to see how he could expect to achieve an early settlement without making visible concessions or reductions in earlier Soviet demands. If he nevertheless chose to pursue this course, and to represent the results as important advances for the USSR, he would thereby set up a powerful momentum for general detente and bring new confusion into official ideology. This in turn would intensify the strains in the international Communist movement and magnify present doubts within the Soviet Party about his leadership. For these reasons, and because of Khrushchev's own ambitions to achieve the kind of victories abroad which are clear defeats for the West, we think it very unlikely that he will proceed in this direction, although we cannot entirely exclude this possibility.

IV. SOVIET TACTICS IN THE NEAR TERM

20. *Berlin and Germany.* We believe that the USSR does not intend in the near future to pose a sharp and direct challenge to the Western position in Berlin. Khrushchev's remarks in East Berlin last January seemed designed to put Ulbricht on notice that his regime, protected by the Wall, must now concentrate upon a policy of internal stabilization and growth and not expect early progress toward the objective of ejecting the Allies. Similarly, the manner in which the USSR has resumed Berlin conversations with the US suggests that it does not intend an early showdown. We think it unlikely, however, that the Soviets expect these talks to lead to any early agreement on Berlin. Instead, we believe that their motives are, first, to avoid the impression

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of weakness which would be conveyed by allowing the issue to die entirely and, second, to get into a position to sow distrust and suspicion among the Allies and West Germany. In pursuing these ends, they are likely to resort to sporadic local harassments.

21. It is possible, however, that the Soviets will in fact seek some sort of mutually acceptable Berlin agreement as a way of discharging Khrushchev's longstanding commitment on this matter and collecting such concessions as can be extracted in return for an easing of pressures on the Allied position in the city. In such an effort, they would presumably have to accept a continued Allied presence in West Berlin and some form of guaranteed access. The USSR for its part would be primarily interested in extracting as much recognition as possible for the GDR, perhaps by involving it in the administration of Allied ground and air access in a way which did not entirely extinguish formal Soviet responsibility. Once such an agreement was achieved, the Soviets would probably feel free to fulfill their long-adjourned promise to conclude a peace treaty with the GDR. The USSR would of course wish to set a predetermined duration on a Berlin agreement and, if this proved impossible, to obtain a formula sufficiently vague on this point to allow them to renew pressures at some future time.

22. Recent developments in the Western Alliance affecting the control of nuclear weapons and the present check to the European unity movement seem to have focused Soviet attention once again on Europe. The prospects for changes of political leadership in West Germany and Britain probably reinforce this tendency. We do not foresee any particular Soviet initiative aimed at European problems, but the possibility of promoting disarray in the Western camp may be more strongly present as a factor affecting Soviet policy than it has been for some time past. Both the Franco-German treaty and the plans to admit West Germany to a larger role in NATO's nuclear policy have already provoked a sharp verbal Soviet response. The vague threat to take counter-measures against West German participation in a multilateral force probably has no more substance than the long series of threats which have accompanied the whole process of German rearmament. It is possible, however, that the Soviets will respond by increasing their efforts to extract from the West some formal recognition of the existence of two Germanies, reasoning that this would offset the dangers of a nuclear-armed Federal Republic by making it more difficult for Bonn to mount heavy pressures against East Germany. There may also be a revival of Soviet interest in limited arms control measures affecting Germany.

23. *Disarmament.* The Soviets probably still see certain advantages to themselves in more general measures of arms control and disarmament. They would doubtless count it an advance, for example, if they could find a means of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons or reducing the chances of accidental war. The burden of modern arma-

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ments on the Soviet economy is an increasingly important argument for the stabilization of the arms race. On the other hand, the Soviets set great store by the political usefulness of great military power. Furthermore, they are aware that broad disarmament or arms control measures would have profound implications—intimate cooperation with the enemy and recognition of a higher sovereignty in an international control organ—running contrary to their assertions of inevitable hostility between the two world camps. As a result, they have regarded disarmament questions primarily as an opportunity to capture peace sentiments and to mobilize pressures against Western military measures.

24. Present Soviet behavior indicates that post-October reappraisals have not altered this approach, and that the USSR does not regard the present period as a favorable one for reaching arms control agreements which would advance Soviet interests. Such a conclusion seems to be reflected in the announcement of economic policies which recommit the Soviets to an intense military competition. Moreover, in the present context, it would be difficult to move on to further significant advances in the field of disarmament and arms control without first concluding a test ban agreement. The Soviets have evidently decided that the gap between Soviet and US positions on this matter, while narrowed, is still too wide to be bridged. In this, we believe that they are influenced by the desire not to encourage hopes for a detente which would be generated inside the USSR by a major East-West agreement. During the present phase, therefore, we believe that the Soviets approach to disarmament will be primarily agitational and will focus on those measures which offer one-sided rather than mutual advantages.

25. *Cuba.*² The outlines of a post-October Soviet policy toward Cuba have now emerged. The USSR's immediate objective is to preserve the position it won in 1960-1962, in the face of pressures from the US and problems in dealing with Castro. To this end it is continuing a substantial flow of economic assistance which appears sufficient to maintain the Cuban economy at least at present levels. It regularly reiterates a commitment, albeit undefined, to the security of the regime. While the Soviets of course would prefer a disciplined puppet to take charge in Havana, they have accepted Castro, put up with his periodic public barbs at the USSR, and apparently agreed that the Moscow-oriented Communists should avoid conflict with him. Similarly, they are trying to reduce the chances of heightened US pressures by not firing upon overflights, by withdrawing some personnel, and probably also by urging Castro to soft-pedal the fomentation of armed revolution in Latin America. One purpose of these actions is to induce the US to move toward *de facto* acceptance of Castro.

² A fuller discussion will be given in the forthcoming NIE 85-63, "Situation and Prospects in Cuba," ~~SECRET~~

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26. The pattern of Soviet policy toward Cuba described above probably means that the primary Soviet aim at present is to consolidate communism in Cuba with a view to using it as a foothold from which to pursue the longer term struggle for Latin America which the Soviets foresee. If this is so, it is unlikely that the Soviets would prejudice this aim by again attempting to use Cuba as a strategic base, thus courting violent US action against the Castro regime. This is not to say that the Soviets will never again attempt the introduction of some sort of offensive weapons system into Cuba. The time might come when they would again calculate that the net of advantages and risks would favor such an attempt. For at least the near term, however, the Soviets almost certainly estimate that the risks of such an attempt would be excessive.

27. If this is their present judgment, the Soviet must reconsider the usefulness to them of those forces which went to Cuba as part of the missile deployment. There are some signs that they intend to make gradual further withdrawals, but we would expect a significant number of Soviet military personnel to remain in Cuba indefinitely, in training and advisory roles at least. We expect the Soviets to hand over to Castro their advanced weapons as the Cuban forces are trained to operate them, possibly including control over the surface-to-air missile (SAM) system. We are unable to estimate a date by which Cubans would acquire complete control of the SAM system, but we do not exclude that this could occur as early as the latter part of 1963. This would, in the Soviet view, involve some risk of Cuban attacks upon reconnaissance aircraft which could touch off a new major crisis, but they may regard this risk as preferable to the political cost of either withdrawing the system or trying to keep it indefinitely under their own command.

28. *The Underdeveloped Areas.*³ The USSR's understanding of the "national liberation" movement identifies the emergence of new, independent nations as an important gain for the Soviet world position. The Soviets go on, however, to argue the necessity of a second stage, that of "national democracy," the hallmark of which is the participation of local Communists in a governing national front. This in turn creates the prerequisites for "completing" the revolution, with or without violence, by installing the Communist Party in power. Events of the last five years, however, have not followed this pattern. Cuba has reached approximately the predicted destination, but by an unpredicted route and in a manner which leaves the USSR with economic and military leverage but without full disciplinary control. The Indonesian Communist Party has successfully practiced the tactics of building political

³ For a detailed discussion of Soviet policy in the Middle East, see the recent NIE 11-6-63, "The Soviet Role in the Arab World," dated 24 April 1963, SECRET. The USSR's approach to Africa is examined in NIE 11-12-62, "Trends in Soviet Policy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa," dated 5 December 1962, ~~SECRET~~

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weight and respectability and shows some promise of leading its country into the phase of "national democracy." But the Cuban experience, and the Indonesian Party's behavior in the Sino-Soviet dispute, cannot give the Soviets much assurance that the Indonesian Party in power would follow Soviet guidance in a disciplined way either. Elsewhere, nationalist leaders have generally rebuffed or even repressed the Communists; in some cases, Soviet state relations with the new governments have not escaped damage.

29. One of the features of the general line of policy described in this paper will probably be an increased emphasis, in areas where this is feasible, on efforts to build subversive capabilities and tangible political assets within the underdeveloped countries. The challenge of the Chinese Communists, and in Latin America the competing appeal of Fidelismo, reinforce the reasons for a greater Soviet effort in this direction. Nevertheless, we do not expect any radical turn in Soviet policy stressing early Communist attempts to come to power. The Soviet leaders continue to give evidence that, in most cases, they regard such attempts as premature, more likely to set back rather than advance the fortunes of the local parties, and prejudicial to other Soviet interests. Meanwhile, they will continue to rely upon diplomacy and material assistance; even though stringencies in the domestic economy and their growing awareness of the limited political returns on aid programs may lead them to become more selective in assuming new economic commitments, they do not wish to abandon this field to the West.⁴

30. *Communist China.* At the present stage of the Sino-Soviet dispute, neither Moscow nor Peiping entertains much hope of pressuring or persuading the rival leadership to alter its stand. The stakes in the conflict are therefore the allegiance of other Communist parties and radical movements in the non-Communist world. Because China has made gradual but regular gains in this competition over the last two years, particularly in Asia, the Soviets have a strong interest in gaining some sort of respite, especially at a time when the accumulation of problems elsewhere has lowered their prestige. The clearest example of this interaction occurred last October when the Soviets, foreseeing the possibility of a retreat in the Cuban missile crisis, made a vain bid to forestall Chinese criticism by momentarily supporting Peiping in its border dispute with India. The same tendency is evident in Khrushchev's call for a truce in polemical warfare and efforts to arrange bilateral talks.

31. But while the Soviets can shelve an issue like Berlin simply by ceasing to agitate it, they have no means of unilaterally shutting off the Sino-Soviet dispute. The Chinese show no disposition to stop pressing their case, and Khrushchev is unwilling to make concessions important

⁴For an examination of Soviet aid to these countries, see NIE 10-63, "Bloc Economic and Military Assistance Programs," dated 10 January 1963, ~~SECRET~~

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enough to allow the two to compose their differences for a time. The present attempts to convoke a meeting have been carried on in a remarkable public correspondence filled with uncompromising restatements of position and veiled threats and insults. We think that a conference, if it comes about, will at most result in a superficial compromise which would be highly vulnerable to the next turn of international events. Beyond these maneuvers, the general outlook is for a continuing and widening estrangement between the two powers in which both Soviet and Chinese nationalism will become increasingly prominent.

32. In southeast Asia, differences with China, which include differences over the tactics of "national liberation" struggle, have worked to complicate Soviet policy. Because of the important position of the North Vietnamese as the prime movers of Communist policy in both Laos and South Vietnam, the Soviets are probably increasingly reluctant to oppose North Vietnamese interests. The Soviets probably do not want to dissipate what influence they have in Hanoi by constant intervention over secondary questions of local tactics, particularly if in doing so they appear to be giving way to Western pressures. On the other hand, the Soviets have broader interests and problems which transcend those concerning Laos. Hence they would be loath to give the North Vietnamese or Chinese a free hand to decide Communist policy. On balance, even though the Soviets still probably prefer to maintain the Geneva settlement, we think that they will be unable to respond to US and British efforts to stabilize the Laotian situation unless US pressures induce the local Communists to seek Soviet support.

V. THE LONGER RUN

33. It is wholly uncertain how long Soviet policy will focus on the tasks of consolidation designed to prepare for a renewed offensive against the non-Communist world. This depends on a number of factors, such as the situation in the top leadership, the success of the USSR's efforts to improve its relative military position, and the opportunities for forward action opened up by developments abroad. An aggravation of divisions in Europe and between Europe and the US, for example, would encourage the Soviets to pursue more actively the exacerbation of differences in the Western camp. General policy, moreover, might be heavily influenced by the need to respond to some unexpected turn of events, such as a successful Communist revolution in Latin America, the flaring up of a new Cuban crisis, or an escalation of armed conflict in southeast Asia.

34. In our last estimate of the future course of Soviet foreign policy,⁵ we examined the possibility of a gradual evolution in the Soviet world outlook which would diminish the importance of those conceptions of

⁵ NIE 11-9-62, "Trends in Soviet Foreign Policy," dated 2 May 1962, ~~SECRET~~.

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hostility derived from Communist ideology. At that time, we judged it possible that, over a quite unpredictable period of time, certain factors might force the Soviet leaders to adopt a more "normal" approach to world politics, one giving greater weight to national interests and conventional modes of international behavior as these are understood in the West, and less to the effort to expand indefinitely the area of Moscow's control. In this section, we reconsider the nature and influence of these factors: the course of developments inside the USSR, changing relations within the Bloc and the Communist movement, and the movement of events in the East-West competition.

35. *Internal Developments.* A year ago, we concluded that there was some prospect of an evolutionary trend inside the USSR which, by allowing public opinion to acquire a larger influence, would have some moderating effect on the Soviet world outlook. We have seen no significant movement over the last year, however, in the direction of involving wider circles of opinion, presumably closer to the aspirations of the general population, in Soviet policymaking. The regime has laid new economic burdens on the consumer and, in Cuba, carried the country into a risky and remote adventure irrelevant to the concerns and desires of the people. These actions have probably cost the regime some of the popular confidence and loyalty which it seeks, and the relatively bleak outlook for the consumer in 1963 raises the possibility that demonstrations of discontent may recur on the considerable scale of 1962. But these reactions do not endanger the bases of regime control, and the recent reaffirmation of military priorities in the allocation of economic resources confirms that they remain only one factor, and evidently not a decisive one, in the leadership's choice of policies.

36. We attach considerable long-run importance, however, to the climate of opinion which, making use of the opportunities of de-Stalinization, has manifested itself among Soviet writers and artists. The recent works of the cultural intelligentsia, and their responses to critical attack, implicitly and sometimes even explicitly reject the legitimacy of party authority in the arts. More than this, in their strong affirmation of human values and their condemnation of the Stalinist past, they have formulated the hitherto unspoken question of the present leadership's responsibility for the crimes of the 1930's and 1940's and, consequently, its fitness to rule today. Implicit in their revolt is also a repudiation of the way in which the party defines its historic mission and its allegation that the Western world is inevitably hostile to the USSR.

37. The regime has shown a special sensitivity to the intellectuals' contention that the older generation does not deserve the respect of its sons. It senses in this not only a criticism of individuals, but a repudiation of the political achievements of the revolution to date. Current measures of repression reflect party fears that these attitudes are spreading to other groups, and there are signs that some students and scien-

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tific-technical workers share the artists' outlook. In the face of the present crackdown and demands for recantation, many of the rebellious artists may not be able to sustain the collective insubordination which their current silence represents. We believe, however, that their alienation from the party leadership as presently constituted is profound, and that it will continue to find expression so long as the regime remains unwilling, as it appears to be at present, to resort to repressions which truly terrorize.

38. *Relations in the Communist World.* In the past year, events have forced the Soviet leadership to move considerably further away from the traditional Communist view of Moscow as the undisputed center and order-giver for the entire world movement. Even as they look beyond Mao Tse-tung to his successors, they have little hope of being able to restore unity of action with Communist China or to be relieved of the necessity to combat its independent influence in parties and movements which earlier were exclusive Soviet preserves. By force of various circumstances, they have had to extend a special status to Cuba in the socialist camp and to watch Albania, North Korea, North Vietnam, and the parties in non-Communist Asia move varying distances out of their sphere of influence. In pursuing a rapprochement with Tito, they have had to compromise their old demands of hegemony.

39. In all these ways the Soviets, responding to a pluralistic and contradictory world, are practicing a political give-and-take which has less and less relation to traditional techniques of Stalinist manipulation and to the blacks and whites of Stalinist thought. We believe that this process within the Communist movement has an eroding effect upon the basic Soviet view of world politics as essentially a bipolar struggle of camp against camp. The private discourse of Soviet citizens and officials frequently reflects a recognition that, in some matters, Soviet interests parallel those of the West rather than those of Communist China. It would be wrong, we think, to interpret this trend as leading in the direction of a common Soviet-Western front against China. But it is not unreasonable to expect that the loosening of relationships inside the Communist world will be a significant factor tending to diminish the ideological ingredient in the Soviet outlook upon the non-Communist world.

40. *The Course of East-West Competition.* In our last estimate, we singled out the success or failure which the USSR's foreign policy encounters as perhaps the most significant factor affecting the Soviet outlook on the outside world. Since that time, the record contains much more failure than success, but we do not perceive signs of any fundamental Soviet reappraisal of the validity of their key doctrines. We continue to believe, however, that the prolonged frustration of Soviet objectives, particularly the more ambitious aims having to do

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with a world-wide conflict of systems, holds some promise over the long run of bringing the USSR around to a view which accepts the permanence of a pluralistic world. Conversely, it seems certain that successes in expanding Soviet influence, major weakenings in Western positions, and in particular any further advances of direct Communist rule will act to confirm the more far-reaching hopes and expectations of the Soviet leaders.

41. It is possible, however, that the experience of prolonged failure to advance toward Communist objectives would bring to the fore the more dogmatic elements in the Soviet outlook. But even if ideological hostility should diminish in the long run, this would not bring an end to international conflicts of interest or necessarily reduce the danger of general war. On the contrary, even in these circumstances the requirements of Soviet national security, prestige, and ambition, as seen by the Soviet leaders and people, would still bring the USSR into frequent collision with the interests of other states. The most that could be expected would be that some issues would become more tractable and negotiable, particularly those not deeply rooted in the national interests of the Soviet state, and that the occasional recognition of a measure of common interest with the West would not invariably be stifled by ideological hostility.

VI. THE QUESTION OF SUCCESSION

42. A key uncertainty surrounding future Soviet policy arises from the problem of the succession to Khrushchev. The style, skill, and conceptions of the top leader still play a major role in determining Soviet choices and in the effectiveness with which policies are prosecuted. We think, for example, that Khrushchev's personal views and attributes have been of major importance in shaping Soviet policies over the past decade, and that the USSR under a different leader might have posed significantly different problems to the US.

43. The Soviet Party appears to be no better equipped with an accepted mechanism for the designation of a successor and his orderly assumption of power than it was a decade ago. The most likely sequence of events, in our view, is a repetition of the post-Stalin experience, in which the late leader's senior associates conduct a struggle for supremacy behind a facade of collectivity. The main arena of conflict will be the leading party organs, but unless a single figure can gain control fairly soon, the contenders will probably try to bolster their strength by appealing to important interest groups outside the professional party apparatus. Of these groups, we believe that the economic administration, weakened by continuing reorganizations, will be an even less important political counter than when Malenkov tried to use it after 1953, and the police would probably become a significant factor

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only in the event that a succession struggle was prolonged and was accompanied by popular unrest which enlarged the role of the security forces.

44. There is some reason to believe, however, that the military leadership will be a substantial factor in post-Khrushchev maneuvering for power. The special efforts to rehabilitate Stalin's military victims and military attempts to maximize their own credit for World War II victories point to a strong sense of corporate identity among the senior officers, although we also have evidence of conflicts among the marshals. More important, the military leadership in the last two years has increasingly asserted its own views, not always unanimous, on questions of military doctrine and strategy; at times it has seemed even to be giving its opinions a more general political import as well. We do not believe that the military aspires to an independent political role in Soviet politics, but if, as we expect, the military and economic choices facing the USSR become more acute, the senior officers will probably find themselves more deeply involved in matters of general policy. Indeed, there are some present indications of party alarm on this score, and it is possible that, before the succession question arises, steps will be taken to restrict the political role of leading military personalities.

45. We know little about the individual policy views of Khrushchev's colleagues. It is clear, however, that the leadership is frequently divided over policy issues, and the record of the succession struggles after Lenin and Stalin indicates that divergent views on policy are heavily involved in innerparty competition. So long as present trends continue in the economy, in the relationship of East-West military power, in Bloc relations, and in Soviet fortunes abroad, Khrushchev's heirs will confront a number of acute issues and decisions. His departure would make it easier to ditch some policies to which his personal prestige has been attached. But it would aggravate most problems by bringing about an inevitable temporary reduction of Soviet prestige, a loss of authority in the Communist movement, and a general uncertainty in the country.

46. In such circumstances, it is normal for Soviet politicians to subordinate their own views to expediency and to espouse those policies which seem most likely to serve their personal ambitions. At the same time, a powerful weapon in this competition is a comprehensive program which a leader can represent as promising solutions to a broad range of problems confronting the regime; to be without a program is a grave weakness. Thus contenders for power are under pressure to formulate competing proposals, designed to appeal to politically important groups, on a number of issues. Initially the tendency would probably be for more conservative elements to gain predominance, but the longer a succession struggle remains unresolved, the more tendency there would be for a wider range of alternative policies to be given active

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consideration. This tendency creates the likelihood that, if the struggle was protracted, the circle of political participation would also widen as rivals reached out beyond the party elite for support.

47. Because of these factors, the period ushered in by Khrushchev's departure may present special opportunities and dangers to the US. Relations with the non-Communist world, and particularly with the leading rival power, are likely to be among the prime issues in any political competition, since these are intimately related to military problems, economic difficulties, and the key questions of China and Germany. We think it very unlikely that a "war party" will emerge in the Kremlin; there is no evidence that other leaders take a less sober view than Khrushchev of the consequences of nuclear war, and indeed some information indicates that the military regard the USSR as inadequately prepared at present to engage in one. But a faction may form which seeks to meet the problems of internal discontent and Chinese pressure by placing greater stress on factors of tension in East-West relations. It is also possible that a succession struggle would generate arguments for some accommodation with the West as a means of coping with these same problems. At any rate, the US will almost certainly be assailed with contrary indications, all of them difficult to interpret, and some of them suggesting that important changes are possible depending on the attitude adopted by the West. If Khrushchev's departure occurs at a time when existing policies are enjoying poor results, the succession period may in fact offer unusual chances for movement in Soviet policy.

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